

## **Summary of Conclusions of workshop "Platform of European Memory and Conscience" Lichtenstein Palace, Prague November 10-11**

Representatives from 19 countries representing both national governments and institutions met to discuss how to follow up steps taken so far towards fostering a common approach to dealing with Europe's diverse experience of totalitarian regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initial discussion aimed at charting how to move forward was centred on four main issues: The standpoints expressed are not legally binding.

### **The platform proposal:**

Participants supported the broad idea of a platform of European Memory and Conscience as a means of addressing Europe's fractured experiences and perceptions of its recent totalitarian past.

The European platform of Memory and Conscience should exist side by side with existing national institutions as a forum for networking, increasing public awareness and bolstering democratic values, and encouraging research and educational projects.

### **Geographical and Historic Scope:**

Europe's communist and Nazi/Fascist past should be the core focus for a new platform to be judged on their own terrible records.

Many speakers called for the geographical focus to extend beyond the EU's current members to include for example Russia, Ukraine and non-EU Balkan states at least in terms of cooperation.

Historic time frames discussed stretched from the Russian Revolution in 1917 until the end of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe including the ongoing consequences

### **Detailed goals:**

Fostering networking between existing institutions, common research and exchange of views, educational projects were identified as some of the basic areas where the platform could provide 'added value.' Commemoration of the totalitarian past should be a tool for strengthening democracy, human rights and preventing the repetition of the painful past. The platform should also encourage public awareness of totalitarian communist regimes still at large. Speakers from historical institutions on both sides of the former 'Iron Curtain' highlighted the ignorance of young people in EU countries about their own and the continent's recent totalitarian history which creates concern about the EU's basic values.

### **Legal form:**

This proved one of the most difficult issues with disagreement on this point which must be discussed further. Some speakers voiced support for the creation of a specific new European agency to carry out the platform's aims with some favouring adaption of an existing body as a fall back option. Some speakers warned a new agency would likely be opposed or questioned by their countries because of cost and administrative complications (for example unanimity required by the EU Council). Other speakers said a foundation based upon an intergovernmental agreement could be a speedier solution before a longer lasting accord.

### **The next steps:**

Comments on the non-paper should be sent within two weeks until November 23.

A permanent working group should be formed which will elaborate on the specific form the platform should take and the follow up steps to achieve it.